

A male golfer in an orange polo shirt and white trousers is captured in the middle of a golf swing on a lush green course. He is wearing white and green Adidas sneakers. The background shows a clear blue sky, distant hills, and a body of water. A golf ball on a tee is visible in the foreground.

Today's
Golfer

PART 1

TOTAL GAME IMPROVEMENT PLAN

LONG GAME

**Find more fairways, hit more greens
and shoot lower scores this summer**

A stronger long game starts here...



Welcome to a feast of tips and drills, all aimed squarely at firing consistency, accuracy and power into your long game.

While all the advice here should prove useful, you'll get the most out of this supplement by applying tips that target your own, personal weakness – and for that, we encourage you to gather some stats.

From the high-tech ShotLink system used on the PGA Tour to numerous phone-based apps, everyone is looking at numbers to improve. The stat-tracking scorecard (right) is designed to

simplify the process, and let you easily identify where your game is strong and weak. Stats prove the most significant ingredient of a score is greens in regulation (GIR). But some analysis of fairways hit, and your miss pattern for fairways and greens, will help you form an accurate picture of what to work on.

When you have that, we've got advice to help. With tips on set-up, accuracy, shot shaping, strategy, power and more, you're sure to find something valuable. And there's 100s more on video at www.todaysgolfer.co.uk

Learn from TG top-50 coaches and tour pros



Lee Cox
Coach to Long
Driver Joe Miller



James Whitaker
PGA pro at two
Yorkshire venues



Steve Astle
England Golf
Union coach



David Brooks
England Golf
Union coach



Darren Parris
Head Pro at
North Foreland



Gary Bason
PGA South
coach of 2011



Jon Woodroffe
Advanced Fellow
of the PGA



Ian Clark
Advanced Fellow
of the PGA



Matt Baldwin
Top 60 in 2014
Race to Dubai



Andy Sullivan
Two European
Tour wins

TOTAL GAME IMPROVEMENT PLAN: LONG GAME

Today's
Golfer

Stat analysis:
long game
performance

COURSE			
DATE	PAR	SLOPE	RATING

HOLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
PAR																		
SCORE																		
FAIRWAY HIT	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
WHERE MISSED																		
DRIVING DISTANCE																		
DISTANCE TO PIN																		
GREEN IN REGULATION	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
WHERE MISSED																		
PROXIMITY TO HOLE																		

TOTALS

Keep track of your totals for each category. Check them against the date to monitor long-term improvement.

SCORE

FAIRWAYS HIT

AVERAGE DRIVING DISTANCE

GREENS IN REGULATION

AVERAGE PROXIMITY TO HOLE

PHOTOCOPY THIS SCORECARD OR DOWNLOAD IT AND PRINT MORE AT WWW.TODAYSGOLFER/MYSTATS

1. TEE STRATEGY: FIND THE FAIRWAY

Use your shape

David Brooks When faced with a tough drive most people will ignore the danger and try to hit one straight. However, we all have a natural shape and should embrace it as this widens the fairway. Whether you hit left-to-right or vice-versa, simply aiming up the

middle cuts the fairway in half. You are much better aiming up the right side if you draw the ball or aiming up the left side for a fade and trusting your swing. This gives you much more of the fairway to aim at. Think about where to tee the ball to best help your shape.





Take one club less

James Whitaker A fairway wood or hybrid is a great option on short par fours, tight holes with trouble either side, or if you're trying to rebuild a score having lost your momentum. Just get it in play and get yourself going again. You don't want to hit down on the ball like an iron or up on the ball like a driver, you just need to sweep it off the peg with these clubs. Put the ball position a couple of inches inside the left heel to help with that sweeping motion.

2. SET-UP: GET THE BASICS RIGHT FOR CONSISTENCY

Driver set-up

By Darren Parris



Tee the ball up on your left heel and load your weight – around 55 per cent – on your right side.



That set-up allows you to hit the ball with higher launch and less spin.

Irons set-up

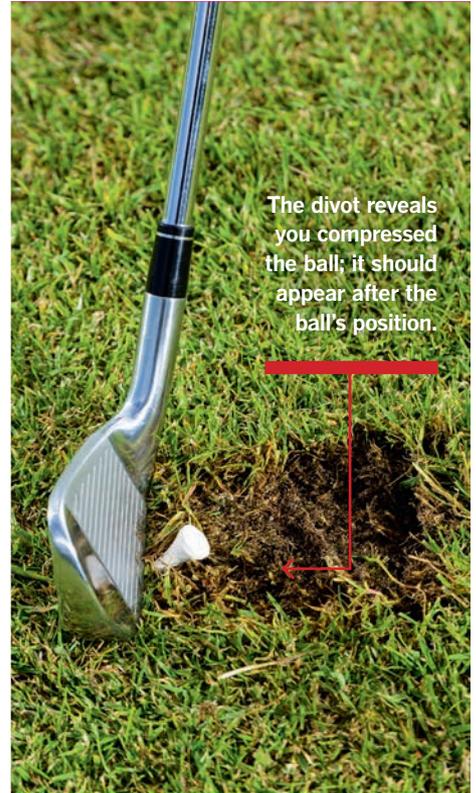
Play the ball centrally. Let your weight favour your left side to add shaft lean.



This set-up allows you to compress the ball to create a pure, powerful strike.



The divot reveals you compressed the ball; it should appear after the ball's position.



2. SET-UP: GET THE BASICS RIGHT FOR CONSISTENCY

Perfect grip

By Jon Woodroffe

Lay the grip across the fingers, lift the club and look at the butt, imagining a clock face. Your left thumb should point at 1:30.



If your grip has the right placement and pressure you should be able to lift the club with the index finger of your gloved hand.



TOTAL GAME IMPROVEMENT PLAN: LONG GAME



The grip should be placed here so that, when closed, the thumb is almost level with the middle of the index finger.



Bring the bottom hand in from above so the lifeline drops onto the top thumb. Bringing it in from the side sees the grip too much in the base of the fingers.

2. SET-UP: GET THE BASICS RIGHT FOR CONSISTENCY

Overlapping makes it easier to place the club across the fingers of your gloved hand and bring your lower hand in from above.



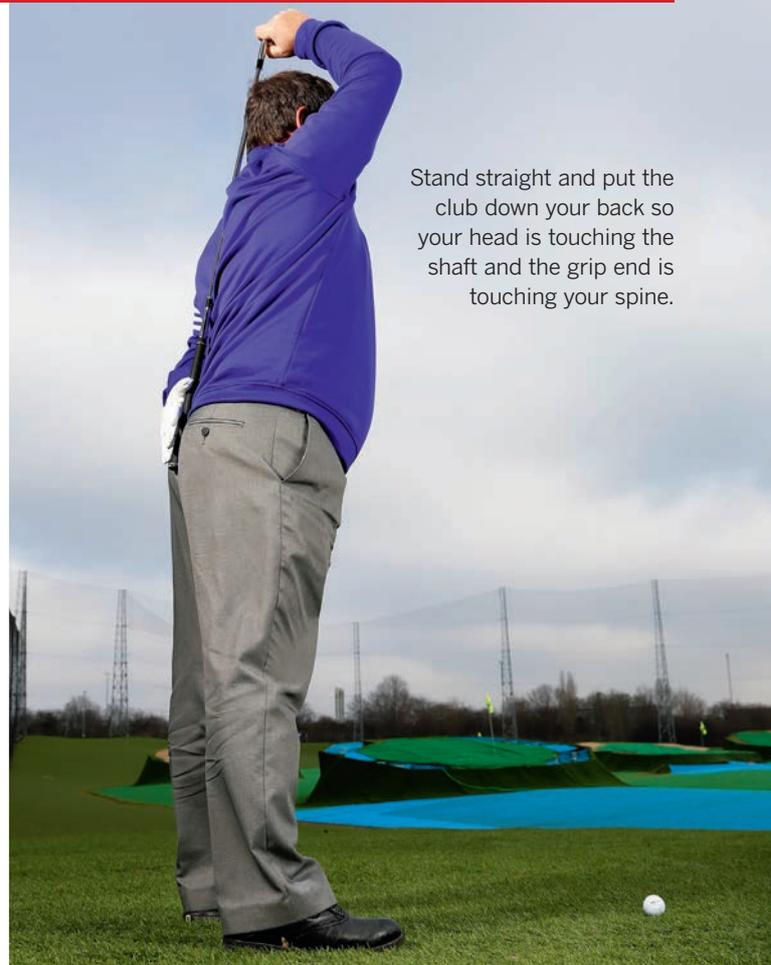
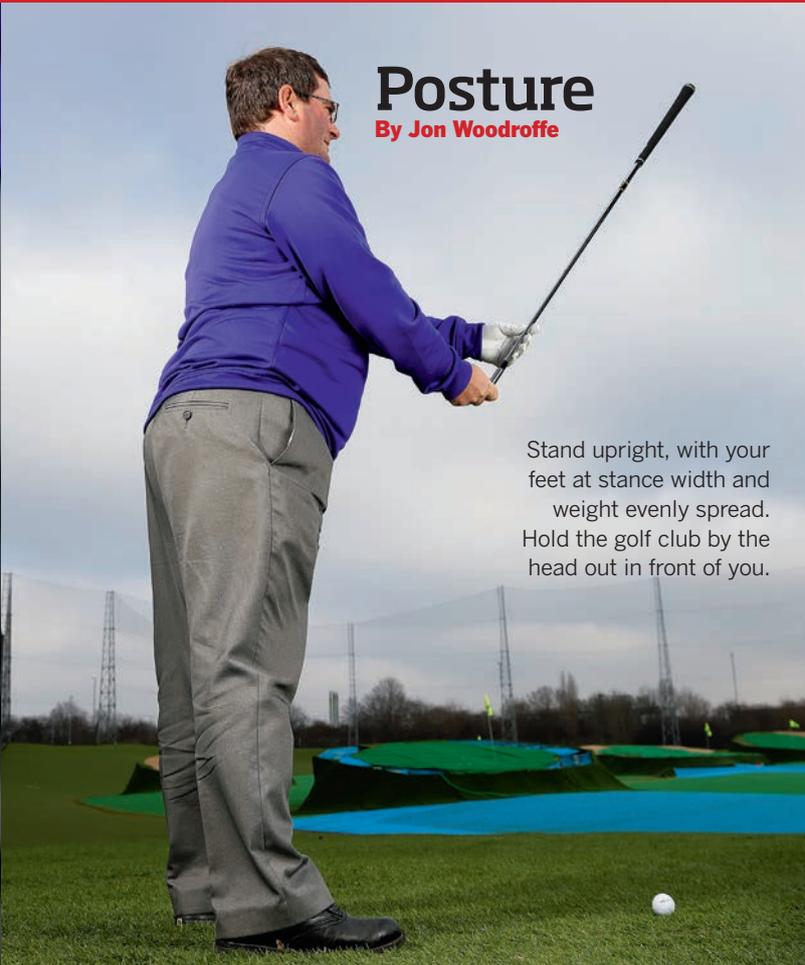
Place your lower thumb to the side of the grip, not on top – which limits the wrist's ability to hinge and can cause hooks.

Posture

By Jon Woodroffe

Stand upright, with your feet at stance width and weight evenly spread. Hold the golf club by the head out in front of you.

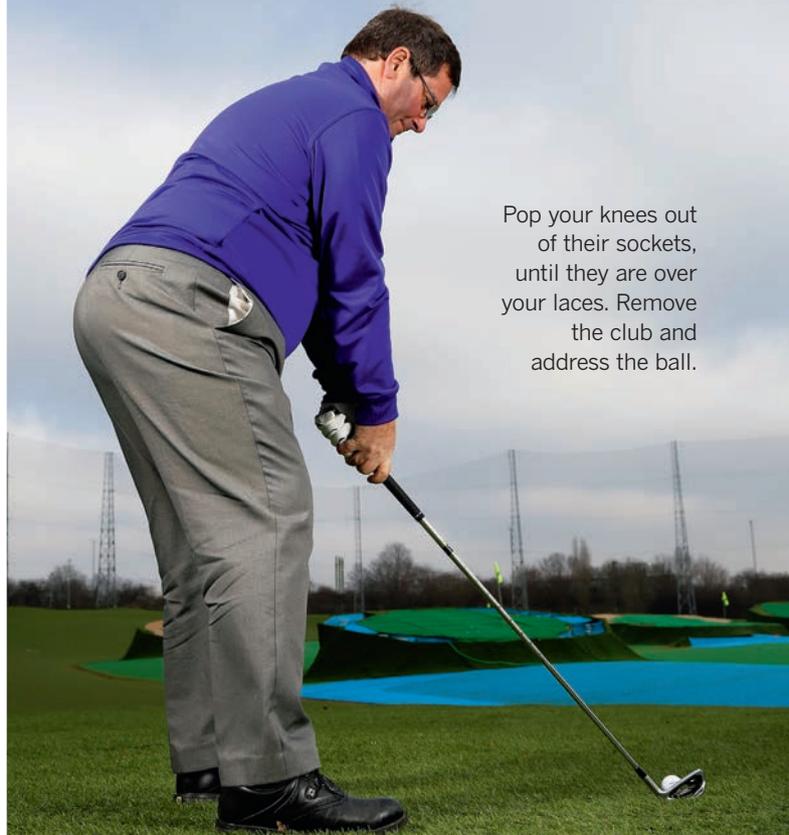
Stand straight and put the club down your back so your head is touching the shaft and the grip end is touching your spine.



2. SET-UP: GET THE BASICS RIGHT FOR CONSISTENCY



Keeping the shaft attached to your back, tilt forward from the hips. Make sure the back of your head stays against the shaft.



Pop your knees out of their sockets, until they are over your laces. Remove the club and address the ball.

Get comfortable over the ball

A simple way to ensure you are the right distance from the ball is to address it, take your right hand off the club and let your arm hang vertically down.



Swing the arm away from the club before swinging it back towards it. If the hand fits back in the right place you are well positioned.

If your hand comes back under the grip you know you are standing too far from the ball. If it comes over the grip you are too close. Adjust your address position accordingly.



3. POWER: BOMB IT FURTHER

Four power keys

By Gary Bason

Take a wide stance so your knees are inside your feet and shoulders inside knees.



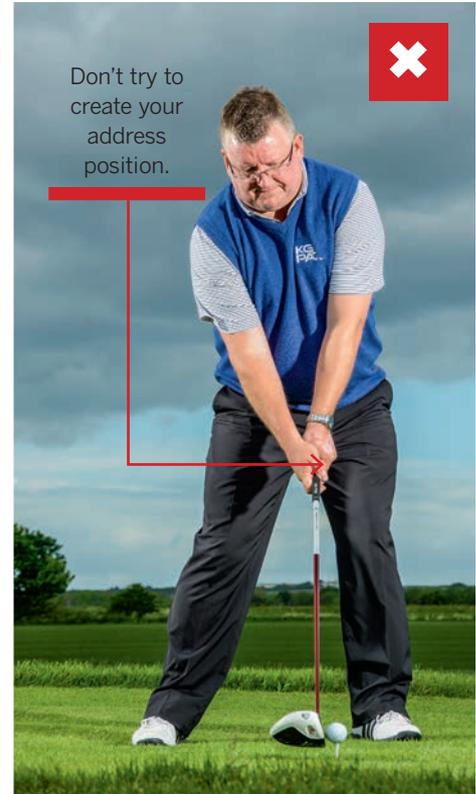
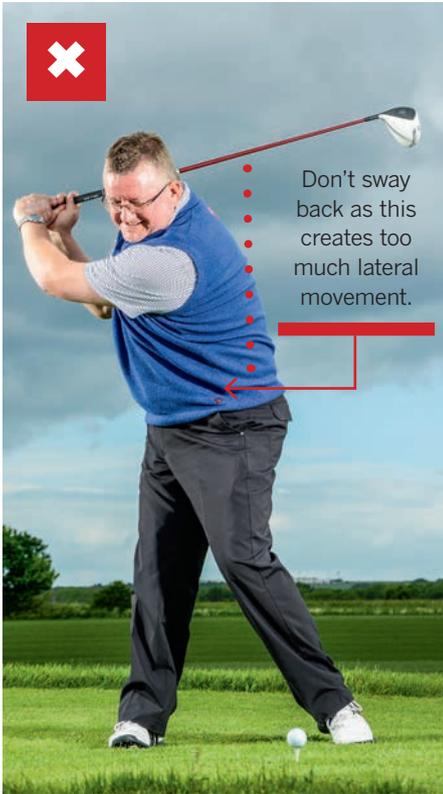
Tilt back and bump your hips to the left to promote an upward strike.



Simply rotate your right hip backwards to create a strong coiling motion.



TOTAL GAME IMPROVEMENT PLAN: LONG GAME



3. POWER: BOMB IT FURTHER

Arm speed

By Lee Cox



High lead arm speed is key to long hitting. Build it by turning a club upside-down or using an old shaft and swinging one-handed.



1. Two movements in your lead wrist are key during the downswing. Firstly your wrist uncocks...



2. ...before swivelling or rotating to square the face at impact. The speed of these moves has a huge bearing on how far you will hit it.

Tee at the toe and hit up

By Ian Clark

If the middle of your driver is behind the ball, contact tends to be towards the heel as the club rises. Teeing it towards the toe of the club will help you strike it out of the centre.



To hit up, practise with a water bottle a few inches past your left foot. Let the club swing through over the top.



4. APPROACH STRATEGY: FIND THE GREEN



Take one club more

Gary Bason I would say the most common reason for amateurs not hitting enough greens in regulation is that they come up short having not taken enough club. The vast majority of us think we hit the ball further than we actually do. So

to find the heart of the putting surface more often, take one more club and aim for the back edge of the green. Most greens are more protected at the front than the back, and this is a classic example; you don't want to be short here.

TOTAL GAME IMPROVEMENT PLAN: LONG GAME



Taking the stronger iron means you can swing with more control. That makes a centred strike more likely, helping you get the ball back to the pin.

4. APPROACH STRATEGY: FIND THE GREEN

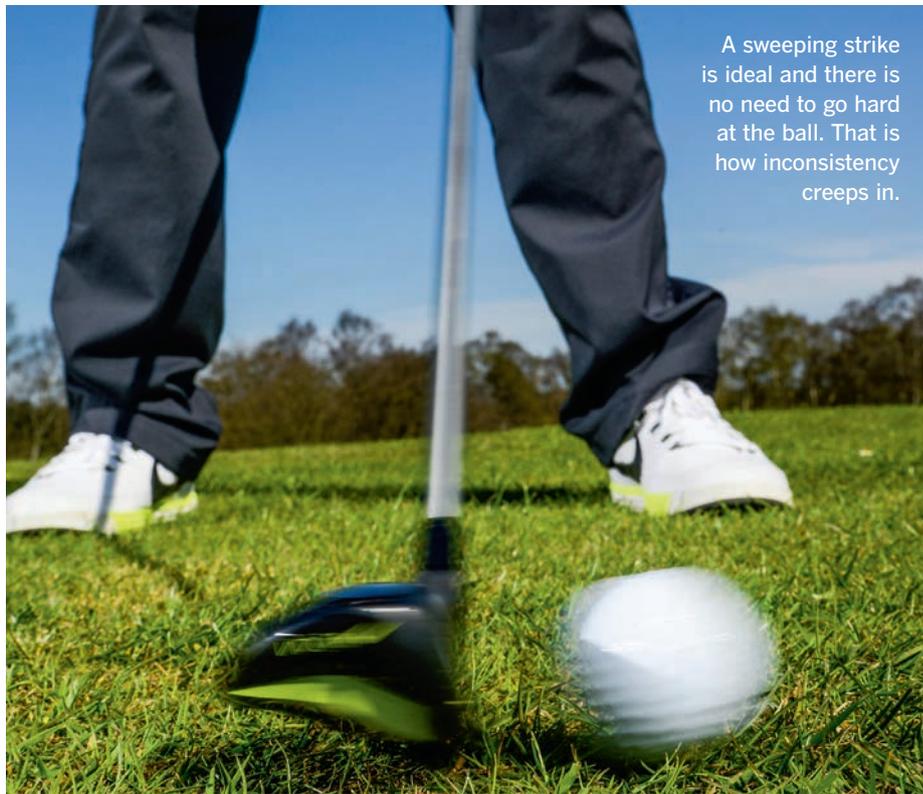
A golfer wearing a white cap with 'GEN' and a Nike logo, a white polo shirt with navy blue and yellow accents, navy blue trousers, and white sneakers with yellow accents is captured mid-swing with a hybrid club on a lush green golf course. The background shows a line of trees under a clear blue sky.

Get your hybrid firing

James Whitaker When you focus on finding the fairway, the chances are you'll want to take less club or use a more controlled swing, leaving you further from the green. That shouldn't put you off keeping it in play though, as it allows you

to make more use of your hybrid on the approach. More powerful, forgiving and easier to launch than a long iron, the hybrid produces a higher flight and softer landing. Hotter face materials mean you don't have to hit them hard to get it home.

TOTAL GAME IMPROVEMENT PLAN: LONG GAME



A sweeping strike is ideal and there is no need to go hard at the ball. That is how inconsistency creeps in.

5. BALL STRIKING: QUICK DRILLS TO MINIMISE THE MISSES

Right foot back to stop the slice

By Steve Astle

Backswing

If you struggle with a slice or lack power, this move encourages better rotation on the way back by activating the right hip and promoting a more in-to-out path.



Throughswing

It dramatically closes your stance to the target, forcing you to swing out to the right. This is another great slice cure and you might even get a bit of draw.



Correct sequence for a crisp strike



Placing a club across your shoulders and going through your swing sequence – backswing, downswing, impact and through – keeps your upper and lower body in sync for those of you who struggle with the consistency of your striking. Ensure the lower body starts the downswing with an initial hip shift towards the target before turning to impact.

5. BALL STRIKING: QUICK DRILLS TO MINIMISE THE MISSES

Split grip for a pure strike



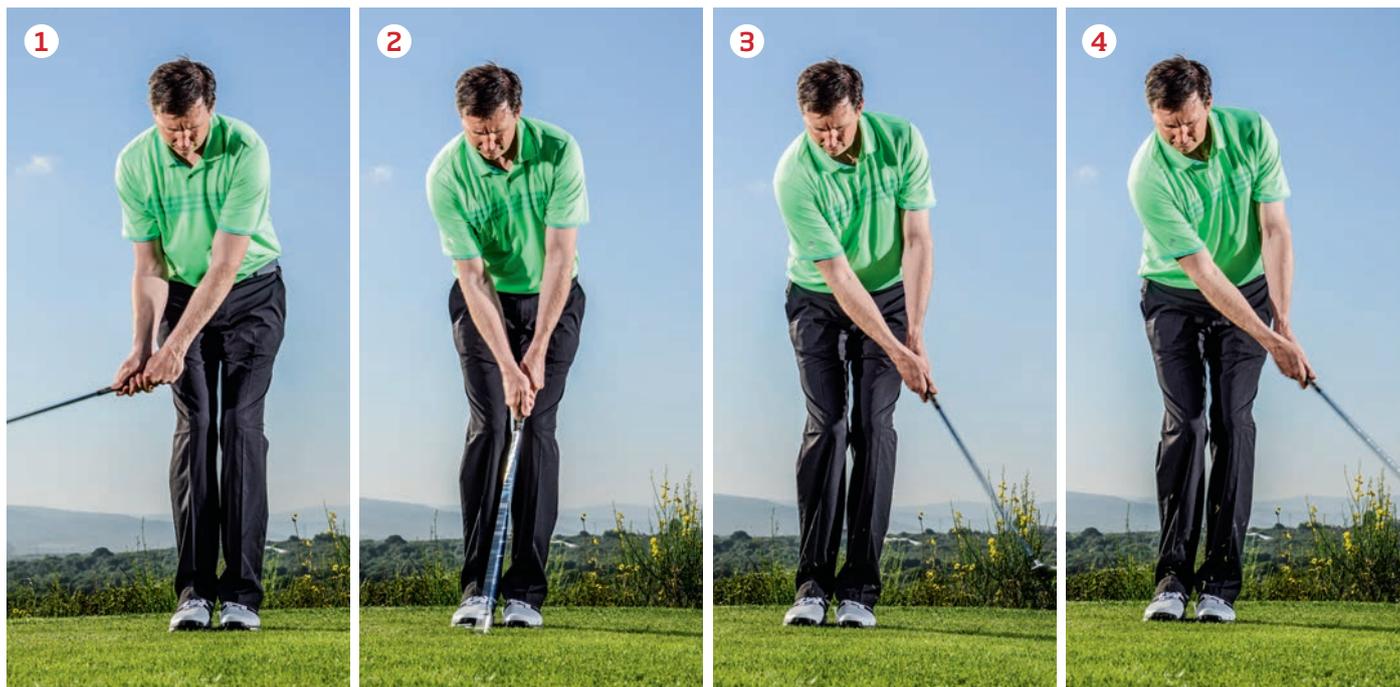
Miss the object to strike down



You don't need a ball for this drill. Simply place a cane or shaft in the middle of your stance or just back of where the ball would be. Make sure the bottom of your swing's arc – where you hit the turf – is past the cane. Recreate this feeling to control the low point and create a consistent strike.

5. BALL-STRIKING: QUICK DRILLS TO MINIMISE THE MISSES

Swing with feet together to improve tempo



Take your regular stance, but with ankles touching. Let armswing and shoulder turn dominate your motion, but make no more than a three-quarter swing. You will instantly feel any excessive upper-body movement because you will overbalance. This is a great routine for tempo and balance.

Get on plane to hit it straight



Place a cane or shaft on the ground just outside where the ball would be. Put a club across your shoulders and turn back. Feel your lead shoulder – and the shaft – pointing at and moving down the cane.



With the lead arm fully extended halfway through the backswing, the butt of your club should be pointing somewhere near the ball line, hands in the middle of the chest and shaft working through your right shoulder.

5. BALL-STRIKING: QUICK DRILLS TO MINIMISE THE MISSES



Body controls impact



Place a club under your belt with the toe to the sky. Rotate your hips through impact, noting how much your left hip has cleared and how the hips help to square the face. This is a great position for a powerful strike and helps understand how the body can control the face.



You can also work on creating similar feelings through the shoulder rotation. Put the club across your shoulders with the toe to the sky. Rotate the right half of your chest to square up the clubface. If the right shoulder drops down and 'under', the face opens up.

6. SHAPE YOUR SHOTS WITH THESE TOUR TIPS

Hit a fade

By Andy Sullivan



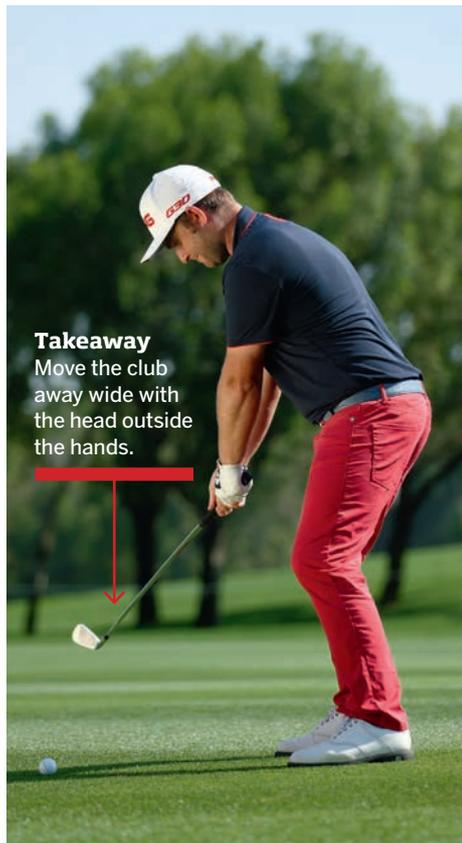
Ball forward

Have the ball up in your stance a fraction to promote the fade.



Promote out-to-in

Open your shoulders slightly to allow you to swing more to the left on the way through.



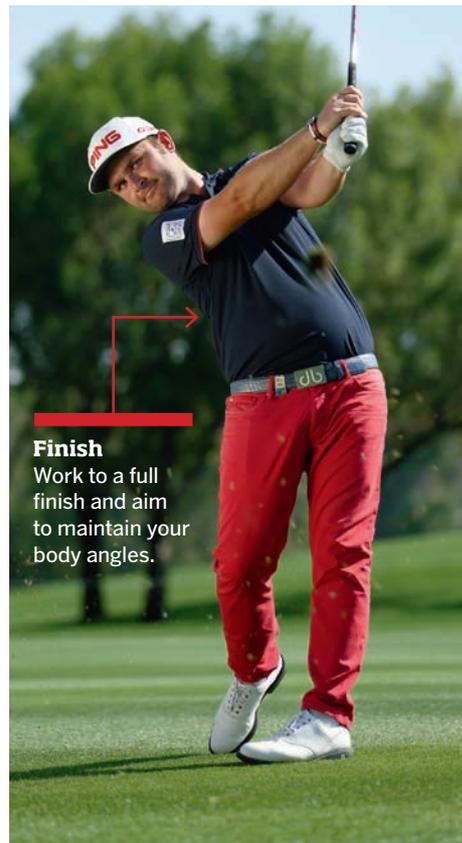
Takeaway

Move the club away wide with the head outside the hands.



Throughswing

The left hip has cleared, allowing me to swing left through the ball and create cutspin.



Finish

Work to a full finish and aim to maintain your body angles.

6. SHAPE YOUR SHOTS WITH THESE TOUR TIPS

Hit a draw

By Matt Baldwin

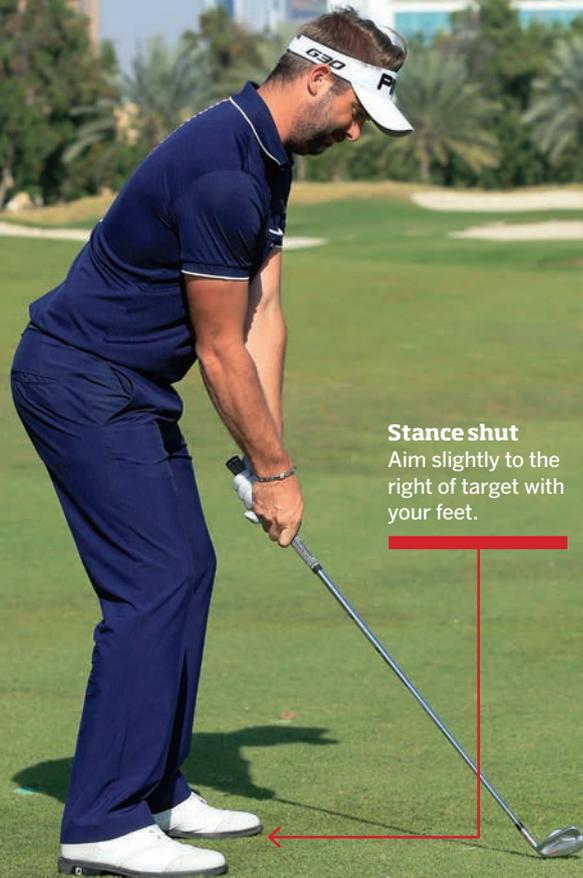
Hands lead

The ball is in the centre of my stance, just back from normal to get my hands forward.



Stance shut

Aim slightly to the right of target with your feet.





Takeaway
Swing along
your feet line.



Delivery
Feel as though
you're swinging
out to the right
to attack from
the inside.



Throughswing
The face rotates
through impact,
helping create
the spin axis
that promotes
a draw.



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TOTAL GAME IMPROVEMENT PLAN

SHORT GAME

How to get up-and-down more often
and shoot lower scores this summer

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